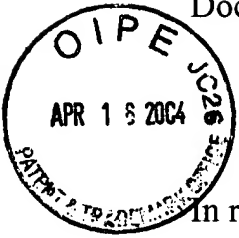


Docket No. 242-140

Patent



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re application of

Richard W. McCoy

Serial No.: 09/864,027

Filed: May 23, 2001

For: HITCH RECEIVER ASSEMBLY WITH
AC AND/OR DC UTILITY OUTLET

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Group Art Unit: 3611

Examiner: Royal, Paul

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

Mail Stop AF
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

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Sir:

The Applicants have carefully reviewed the Office Action of December 2, 2003 and hereby request that the Examiner reconsider his rejection of the claims presented in this patent application. It appears to be a cornerstone of the Examiner's arguments in rejecting the claims that no industry standards exist regarding utility power outlets and trailer connectors. For example, on page 11 of the Office Action the Examiner states "there are no industry standards which make clear what applicant considers the various power outlets therefore the claims are interpreted broadly." As a further example on page 8 the Examiner states "As understood by the Examiner, the art of interconnecting

trailers and connecting trailers to other items, such as electrical recharging centers or camp sites, or providing power from the trailer has not been standardized so that one of ordinary skill would know what is considered a nontrailer connector or connection.”

The Examiner is absolutely and utterly mistaken with regard to the standardization of these connectors and, as such, the cornerstone of his arguments forwarding the rejection of the claims is nonexistent.

It is hoped that the Examiner is familiar with SAE International. The Society of Automotive Engineers has more than 84,000 members including engineers, business executives, educators and students in more than 97 countries who share information and exchange ideas for advancing the engineering of mobility systems. SAE has in fact established and published standards for 4, 5 and 8 conductor electrical connectors for automotive type trailers. These are presented in SAE J1239, a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit A. Similarly, SAE has established standards for cigar lighters and utility power outlets. These are presented in SAE/USCAR-4, a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit B.

It is hoped that the Examiner is also familiar with the NEMA organization. The National Electrical Manufacturers Association was created in the fall of 1926 by the merger of the Electric Power Club and the Associated Manufacturers of Electrical Supplies. NEMA provides a forum for the standardization of electrical equipment, enabling consumers to select from a range of safe, effective and compatible electrical

products. The Examiner's attention is now directed to Exhibit C which is a copy of NEMA Standards Publication ANSI/NEMA WD 6-2002 for plugs and receptacles rated up to 60 ampere and 600 volts. It should be noted this document is marked "Approved American National Standard".

After reviewing Exhibits A-C it is believed the Examiner will agree that standards do in fact exist for trailer connectors and utility power outlets and that the two are not the same. There are in fact distinct structural differences and not just use distinctions as suggested by the Examiner. The Applicants now request that the Examiner go back and consider the arguments previously presented in this file history in accordance with the understanding that industrial standards do exist regarding trailer connectors and utility power outlets.

Further the Applicants confirm that they do "grasp the core principle" that an electrical connector may be used to pass either AC or DC current "because it is inherent to one of ordinary skill in the art that an electrical connector passes electricity/electric current, (AC and DC unless otherwise specified)." The Applicants now ask the Examiner if he grasps the core principle that one skilled in the art would not find it obvious to pass AC current through a trailer connector made in accordance with industry standards to connect a vehicle with a DC electrical circuit to a trailer with a DC electrical circuit. Similarly, if the Examiner maintains his rejection, could the Examiner please explain to the Applicants how the Steiler, Belinky et al., and Hughes patents – which all explicitly

relate to trailer connectors of standardized construction – would be readily connected to electrical appliances and equipment equipped with standardized plugs for connecting to standardized utility power outlets when it is clear that those plugs and the trailer connectors are structurally incompatible?

In point of fact, whether considered alone or in combination, the cited art is not equivalent to the presently claimed invention nor does the cited prior art in any way motivate one skilled in the art to modify any prior art construction of record to arrive at the claimed invention. Accordingly, the presently pending claims patentably distinguish over the prior art and should be formally allowed.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

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Date April 15, 2004 